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Letter dated 18 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the ongoing repression and violations of human rights of the Crimean Tatar population in Crimea being deliberately conducted by the Russian Federation's occupational authorities therein, and, in commemoration of the seventy-first anniversary of the deportation of Crimean Tatars, to bring to your kind attention the attached information on the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944 and current measures being undertaken by the Government of Ukraine aimed at protecting the rights of the deported nations (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yuriy **Sergeyev**

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Annex to the letter dated 18 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944 and current measures being undertaken by the Government of Ukraine aimed at protecting rights of the deported nations

In 1944, Crimean Tatars were deported from the Crimean peninsula as a result of a State-organized and forcible action ordered by the then Soviet leader J. Stalin. The deportation, a form of collective punishment for the alleged collaboration by Crimean Tatars with the Nazis during 1942-1943, is known as *Sürgünlik* in Crimean Tatar (meaning "exile"). A total of 238,500 Crimean Tatars were deported.

In 1967, a Soviet decree withdrew the charges against Crimean Tatars, but the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics did nothing to facilitate their resettlement in their native lands in Crimea. There were no reparations either for lost lives or for confiscated property.

In January 1974, bans on the return to places of former Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian and Crimean Tatar residence in Crimea were lifted by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Since the proclamation of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the Government of Ukraine has made efforts to provide Crimean Tatars with the necessary resources for their resettlement and integration into the Ukrainian society. Almost 270,000 Crimean Tatars (up to 13 per cent of the population) settled in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

In February and March 2014, Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea led to a significant deterioration in the sphere of human rights and freedoms. Crimean Tatars now are facing similar repressions and political prosecutions as they did at the time of the 1944 deportation. Mr. M. Jemilev and Mr. R. Chubarov, leaders of Crimean Tatars, have been banned entry to Crimea until 19 April 2019 and July 2019, respectively.

Irrespective of Russia's actions "on the ground" in Crimea, Ukraine remains committed to protecting rights of Crimean Tatars and establishing the necessary and secure environment for their free development.

The Russian occupation authorities in Crimea are determined to continue their discriminatory policies, including the enforced application of Russian laws and regulations, along with suppressive measures, the imposition of power and physical force abuses.

Ukraine calls on the international community to condemn Russia's illegal actions towards Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and human rights defenders. We call on world democracies to urge the Russian Federation to let international organizations and human rights missions in Crimea do their job.

Deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944

Deportation began on 18 May 1944 in all Crimean inhabited localities. More than 230,000 people were deported, mostly to Uzbekistan. This includes the entire ethnic Crimean Tatar population, at that time about a fifth of the total population of

the Crimean peninsula, as well as a smaller number of ethnic Greeks and Bulgarians. The lack of accommodation and food, failure to adapt to new climatic conditions and the rapid spread of diseases had a heavy demographic impact during the first years of exile. According to surveys conducted by Crimean Tatar activists in the 1960s, more than 109,956 (46.2 per cent) of the 238,500 Crimean Tatar deportees died between 1 July 1944 and 1 January 1947 as a result of starvation and disease. From May to November 1947, another 10,105 Crimean Tatars died of starvation in Uzbekistan (9 per cent of those deported to the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic). Nearly 30,000 (20 per cent) died in exile during a period of a year and a half according to data collected by Soviet authorities (NKVD). As stated in Soviet dissident reports, many Crimean Tatars were forced to work in the large-scale projects implemented by the Soviet GULAG system.

Resettlement of Crimean Tatars in the 1960s

Although a Soviet decree withdrew the charges against Crimean Tatars in 1967, the Soviet Government did nothing to facilitate their resettlement in Crimea or to make reparations for the lost lives and confiscated property. Crimean Tatars, led by the Crimean Tatar National Movement Organization, were not allowed to return to Crimea from exile until the beginning of the time of perestroika in the mid-1980s. The return of Crimean Tatars to the Crimea became widespread beginning in 1987. In the early 1990s, the Crimean Tatars were the third largest ethnic group in Crimea.

Ukraine's independence in 1991

Since Ukrainian independence in 1991, the Government of Ukraine has assumed full responsibility for the fate of all its citizens, including those returning to its territory after deportation. The Declaration of Rights of Nationalities of Ukraine, national laws on "Minorities in Ukraine" and the "Restoration of Rights of Persons Deported on Ethnic Grounds" are among the relevant legal foundations of Ukraine's State policy on protecting rights of formerly deported people. The following programmes on the social adaptation of Crimean Tatars were adopted by the Government of Ukraine: "Programme to promote social adaptation of Crimean Tatar youth in 2002-2005" (2002) and "Programme of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the resettlement of deported Crimean Tatars and other nationalities who returned to Ukraine for residence: their adaptation and integration into Ukrainian society for the period until 2010" (2006, extended lately until 2015).

Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea

In February and March 2014, Russia's attempted annexation of the Crimean peninsula led to significant violations of international law and human rights. Crimean Tatars became the targets of enforced disappearances and abductions by Russian occupation authorities and their illegal gangs. As of now, 21 representatives of the Crimean Tatar community have been kidnapped, 3 of whom were found dead, and more than 130 criminal cases against Crimean Tatars have been filed.

As a result of Russia's occupation policies, over 10,000 Crimean Tatars have had to leave Crimea, most of them settling in other parts of continental Ukraine. Many Crimean Tatar activists have been banned entry to Crimea, including: Mr. M. Jemilev and Mr. R. Chubarov (until 19 April 2019 and July 2019, respectively); Ismet Yuksel, chief coordinator of the information agency "Crimean

News", until August 2019; and Sinaver Kadyrov, dissident, founder of the "Azatlik" movement, and member of the Committee for the Protection of Crimean Tatars, until January 2020.

In view of the importance of protecting Crimean Tatars and other national minorities in Russia's occupied Crimea, Ukraine has undertaken a number of legislative actions to defend the rights of Crimean Tatars. Mr. Mustafa Jemilev, member of Parliament and former Head of the Mejilis of the Crimean Tatar nation, has been appointed as the representative of the President on Crimean Tatars. On 30 March 2014, the Parliament of Ukraine passed a decree on "Acknowledging Crimean Tatars as Indigenous People of Ukraine", a special department on the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol has been established within the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and an inter-party "Crimea" union has been established by Members of Parliament.

The United Nations, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and other international organizations draw attention to numerous cases when Ukrainian locals, especially Crimean Tatars and pro-Ukrainian activists, have been kidnapped, tortured or imprisoned by Russian occupation authorities.

The responsibility for all violations of human rights in Crimea rests with the Russian Federation as an occupying authority under international law.